

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for his thorough search of the art and Office Action. Applicants, by this Amendment, have amended the claims to overcome deficiencies noted in the Examiner's Official Action. After entry of this Amendment Claims 1, 3 – 7, 18 – 26, 28 – 32 and 35 - 36 remain pending in the Application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that new drawings are required contingent upon allowance.

New drawings will be filed when claims are allowed in the application.

Continuing in the Office Action, the rejected Claims 28 – 36 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. The Examiner stated that Applicants have used the term “said cooperation” without antecedent basis in the claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 28 – 36 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The term “cooperation” appears in line 1 of Claim 28.

Continuing in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 3 – 5, 7, 18 – 24 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,652,421 to Veeneman et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Veeneman”).

Regarding Claims 1 and 21, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses an apparatus for dispensing at least one indicium of value (gift certificate) in cooperation with an attached companion device with a delivery of a product apparatus (26, envelope dispenser) comprising:

- control means for controlling dispensing (24)**
- actuator coupled to control means (14/48)**
- link for effecting cooperation (FIG. 3).**

Regarding Claim 21, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses an apparatus and companion device assembled in unitary configuration (600/602).

Regarding Claim 2, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses companion means including a dispensing means (26).

Regarding Claims 3 and 22, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses communication means for communicating (Col. 6, lines 16 – 27; Col. 5, lines 1 – 3), and memory means for storing operational information (Col. 5, lines 5 – 24).

Regarding Claims 4 and 23, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses communication means comprising a telephone connection with a remote controlling station (Col. 6, lines 16 – 27; Col. 5, lines 1 – 3).

Regarding Claims 5 and 24, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses communication means comprising an input access port for providing control by an operator (Col. 3, lines 30 – 35).

Regarding Claims 7 and 26, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses at least one item of value comprising a coupon redeemable for at least one second product (Col. 15, lines 5 – 65).

Regarding Claim 18, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses a method for dispensing at least one item of value from an apparatus in cooperation with operation of a companion device comprising

providing a control means for controlling a providing (24)

providing a means for effecting dispensing means (14/28)

providing a link for effecting cooperation (FIG. 3)

Regarding Claim 19, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses communication means coupled with apparatus for communicating operation information with apparatus regarding operation of apparatus (Col. 6, lines 16 – 27; Col. 5, lines 1 – 3), and providing a memory means for storing operational information (Col. 5, lines 5 – 24).

Regarding Claim 20, the Examiner stated that Veeneman discloses communicating a directive comprising a change from a remote locus (Col. 6, lines 16 – 27; Col. 5, lines 1 – 3).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3 – 5, 7, 18 – 24 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Veeneman.

Independent Claims 1 and 21 each now (after amendment by this Response) require:

An apparatus used in cooperation with an attached companion product vending device; the companion vending device delivering a first product;

an actuator coupled with the companion vending device; the actuator configured for exercising by a user to effect purchasing of

the first product after conveying payment to the companion vending device;

a control means for controlling the apparatus in dispensing at least one coupon in response to exercising the actuator;

the coupon being redeemable for value in connection with purchasing at least one second product;

a providing means coupled with the control means for effecting dispensing the at least one coupon; and

a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator.

Independent Claim 18 now (after amendment by this Response) requires the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation.

Veeneman does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claims 1 and 21]

Veeneman does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of :

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

It is respectfully suggested that Claims 1, 3 – 5, 7, 18 – 24 and 26 patentably distinguish over Veeneman.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6 and 18 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,842,188 to Ramsey et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Ramsey”). According to the Examiner, regarding Claims 1 and 21, Ramsey discloses an apparatus for dispensing at least one indicium of value (Col. 3, lines 34 – 37) in cooperation with an attached companion device, the companion device with delivery of a product apparatus comprising:

- control means for controlling dispensing (Col. 9, lines 45 – 52; Col. 9, line 64 – Col. 10, line 14);**
- actuator coupled to control means (Col. 9, lines 45 – 52);**
- link for effecting cooperation (33; Col. 9, lines 52 – 63);**
- companion means including a dispensing means (Col. 9; lines 45 – 52).**

Regarding Claims 3 and 22, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses

- communication means for communicating (Col. 8; lines 42 – 60; 109, FIG. 4);**
- memory means for storing operational information (Col. 7, lines 20 – 55; Col. 9, lines 52 – 63).**

Regarding Claims 5 and 24, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses

communication means comprising an input access port for providing control by an operator (Col. 8, lines 42 – 67).

Regarding Claims 6 and 25, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses

communication system comprising a satellite communication connection with a remote controlling station (Col. 8, lines 42 – 60; 109, FIG. 4).

Regarding Claim 18, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses a method for dispensing at least one item of value from an apparatus in cooperation with operation of a companion device comprising

- providing a control means for controlling a providing (Col. 9, lines 45 – 52; Col. 9, lines 64 – Col. 10, line 14);**
- providing a means for effecting dispensing (Col. 9, lines 45 – 52);**
- providing a link for effecting cooperation (33; Col. 9, lines 52 – 63).**

Regarding Claim 19, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses a communication means coupled with an apparatus for communicating operation information with the apparatus regarding operation of the apparatus (Col. 8, lines 42 – 60; 109; FIG. 4), and providing a memory means for storing operational information (Col. 7, lines 20 – 55; Col. 9, lines 52 – 63).

Regarding Claim 20, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses communicating a directive comprising a change from a remote locus (Col. 8, lines 42 – 67).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6 and 18 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ramsey.

Independent Claim 1 now (after amendment by this Response) requires:

An apparatus used in cooperation with an attached companion product vending device; the companion vending device delivering a first product;

an actuator coupled with the companion vending device; the actuator configured for exercising by a user to effect purchasing of the first product after conveying payment to the companion vending device;

a control means for controlling the apparatus in dispensing at least one coupon in response to exercising the actuator;

the coupon being redeemable for value in connection with purchasing at least one second product;

a providing means coupled with the control means for effecting dispensing the at least one coupon; and

a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator.

Independent Claim 18 now (after amendment by this Response) requires the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation.

Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claim 1]

Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of :

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

It is respectfully suggested that Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6 and 18 – 20 patentably distinguish over Ramsey.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 1, 3, 5, 18 – 19, 21 – 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,225,056 to Flubacker (hereinafter referred to as “Flubacker”). Regarding Claims 1 and 21, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses an apparatus for dispensing at least one indicium of value (40, stamp dispensing) in cooperation with an attached companion device, a companion device with delivery of a product apparatus (Col. 3, lines 32 – 53) comprising

- control means for controlling dispensing (Col. 3, lines 54 – 62);
- actuator coupled to control means (Col. 4, lines 18 – 46);
- link for effecting cooperation (770).

Regarding Claim 21, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses an apparatus and companion device assembled in unitary configuration (12; Col. 2, lines 47 – 57), and a companion means including a dispensing means (Col. 3, lines 4 – 15).

Regarding Claims 3 and 22, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses a communication means for communicating (Col. 4, lines 1 – 25).

Regarding Claims 7 and 26, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses at least one item of value comprising a coupon redeemable for at least one second product (Col. 3, lines 4 – 15).

Regarding Claims 8 and 27, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses at least one item comprising a product sample (Col. 3, lines 4 – 15).

Regarding Claim 18, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses a method for dispensing at least one item of value from an apparatus in cooperation with operation of a companion device comprising

- providing a control means for controlling a providing (Col. 4, lines 1 – 25);
- providing a means for effecting dispensing means (Col. 3, lines 4 – 14);
- providing a link for effecting cooperation (Col. 4, lines 1 – 25).

Regarding Claim 19, the Examiner stated that Flubacker discloses communication means coupled with an apparatus for communicating operation information with an apparatus regarding operation of the apparatus (Col. 4, lines 1 – 25) and providing a memory means for storing operational information (Col. 4, lines 1 – 25).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5, 18 – 19, 21 – 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Flubacker.

Independent Claims 1 and 21 now (after amendment by this Response) require:

An apparatus used in cooperation with an attached companion product vending device; the companion vending device delivering a first product;

an actuator coupled with the companion vending device; the actuator configured for exercising by a user to effect purchasing of the first product after conveying payment to the companion vending device;

a control means for controlling the apparatus in dispensing at least one coupon in response to exercising the actuator;

the coupon being redeemable for value in connection with purchasing at least one second product;

a providing means coupled with the control means for effecting dispensing the at least one coupon; and

a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator.

Independent Claim 18 now (after amendment by this Response) requires the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation.

Flubacker does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claims 1 and 21]

Flubacker does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of :

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

It is respectfully suggested that Claims 1, 3, 5, 18 – 19, 21 – 22 and 24 patentably distinguish over Flubacker.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 - 8 and 18 – 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,021,362 to Maggard et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Maggard”). Regarding Claims 1 and 21, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses an apparatus suitable for dispensing at least one indicium of value in cooperation with an attached companion device, a companion device with delivery of a product, the apparatus comprising:

control means for controlling dispensing (18);

actuator means coupled to the control means (74);

link for effecting cooperation (Col. 5, lines 25 – 50);

companion means includes a dispensing means (20).

Regarding Claims 3 and 22, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses communication means for communicating (Col. 8, lines 20 – 37), and memory means for storing operation information (Col. 5, lines 25 – 65).

Regarding Claims 5 and 24, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses communication means comprising an input access port for providing control by an operator (Col. 10, lines 30 – 41).

Regarding Claims 7 and 26, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses at least one item of value comprising a coupon redeemable for at least one second product (Col. 8, lines 20- 50).

Regarding Claims 8 and 27, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses at least one item comprising a product sample (20).

Regarding Claim 18, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses a method for dispensing at least one item of value from an apparatus in cooperation with operation of a companion device comprising

providing a control means for controlling a providing (Col. 8, lines 20 – 50);

providing a means for effecting dispensing means (Col. 8, lines 37 – 50);

providing a link for effecting cooperation (Col. 8; lines 20 – 37).

Regarding Claim 19, the Examiner stated that Maggard discloses communication means coupled with an apparatus for communicating operation information with the apparatus regarding operation of the apparatus (Co. 8; lines 37 – 50), and providing a memory means for storing operation information (Col. 8; lines 20 – 50).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 18 – 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Maggard. Claim 8 has been cancelled by this Response.

Independent Claim 1 now (after amendment by this Response) requires:

An apparatus used in cooperation with an attached companion product vending device; the companion vending device delivering a first product;

an actuator coupled with the companion vending device; the actuator configured for exercising by a user to effect purchasing of the first product after conveying payment to the companion vending device;

a control means for controlling the apparatus in dispensing at least one coupon in response to exercising the actuator;

the coupon being redeemable for value in connection with purchasing at least one second product;

a providing means coupled with the control means for effecting dispensing the at least one coupon; and

a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator.

Independent Claim 18 now (after amendment by this Response) requires the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation.

Maggard does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claim 1]

Maggard does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

It is respectfully suggested that Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 18 – 19 patentably distinguish over Maggard.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 28 – 31, 33 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,555, 497 to Helbling (hereinafter referred to as “Helbling ‘497”). Regarding Claim 28, the Examiner stated that Helbling ‘497 discloses a control unit for dispensing at least one indicium in response to door opening, dispensing means responsive to control means, link between apparatus and newspaper dispensing means (Col. 2, lines 1 – 12).

Regarding Claim 28, the Examiner stated that Helbling ‘497 discloses communication means for using with a newspaper vending machine memory means for storing operational information (Col. 2, lines 25 – 29).

Regarding Claim 30, the Examiner stated that Helbling ‘497 discloses a telephone connection (Col. 2, lines 16 – 18).

Regarding Claim 31, the Examiner stated that Helbling ‘497 discloses operator accessible communication access port (Col. 4; lines 19 – 26).

Regarding Claim 33, the Examiner stated that Helbling '497 discloses a coupon (Col. 2; lines 1 – 10).

Regarding Claim 36, the Examiner stated that Helbling '497 discloses an electronic link (Col. 4; lines 16 – 18).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 28 – 31 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Helbling '497. Claim 33 has been cancelled by this Response.

Independent Claim 28 now (after amendment by this Response) requires:

An apparatus used in cooperation with an attached companion product vending device; the companion vending device having an interior storage cavity for storing a plurality of units of a product;

a door movable by a user from a closed position to an open position to gain access to the cavity;

a control unit for controlling the apparatus in dispensing at least one coupon in response to moving the door;

the coupon being redeemable for value in connection with purchasing at least one product;

a providing means coupled with the control means for effecting dispensing the at least one coupon; and

a direct link between the apparatus and the door.

Helbling '497 does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the door exercised by a user for accessing a storage cavity containing products. [Claim 28]

It is respectfully suggested that Claims 28 – 31 and 36 patentably distinguish over Helbling '497.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6, 18 – 22 and 24 – 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsey in view of U.S. Patent 5,596,501 to Comer et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Comer”). The Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses the elements previously discussed and Comer discloses the elements not inherently disclosed by Ramsey. Regarding Claim 21, the Examiner stated that Comer discloses an apparatus and companion device assembled in unitary configuration (Col. 6, lines 6 – 18). According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Ramsey to dispense a receipt from the same kiosk attached to the product dispenser because having the receipt dispenser associated with the product dispenser facilitates pre-connection to sub-systems in a modular kiosk as taught by Comer and come up with the instant invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6, 18 – 22 and 24 – 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsey in view of Comer.

As established earlier hereinabove, Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claim 1]

Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of :

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

Comer contributes nothing toward providing the elements not provided by Ramsey. Applicants have reviewed the other art cited of record. Neither Ramsey, nor Comer nor any combination of Ramsey and Comer anticipates discloses, teaches, shows, suggests, infers or in any way renders obvious the present invention as claimed in Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6, 18 – 22 and 24 – 25.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 3, 5 – 6, 18 – 22 and 24 – 25 patentably distinguish over Ramsey and Comer.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 1, 3 – 6 and 18 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsey in view of WIPO PCT Publication WO 96/06415 to by Phillips (hereinafter referred to as “Phillips ‘415”). According to the Examiner, Ramsey discloses the elements previously discussed, and Phillips ‘415 discloses the elements not inherently disclosed by Ramsey. Regarding Claims 4 and 23, the Examiner stated that Phillips ‘415 discloses a communication means comprising a telephone connection with a remote controlling station (p. 37, lines 3 – 13). According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Ramsey to use a telephone to control dispensing because financial verification can result in credit card sales as taught by Phillips ‘415 and come up with the instant invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1, 3 – 6 and 18 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsey in view of Phillips '415.

As established earlier hereinabove, Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device. [Claim 1]

Ramsey does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

A method for operating an apparatus for dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device that includes the steps of:

providing a direct link between the apparatus and the actuator exercised by a user for initiating a purchase from the companion device; and

exercising the actuator to effect the cooperation. [Claim 18]

Phillips '415 contributes nothing toward providing the elements not provided by Ramsey. Applicants have reviewed the other art cited of record. Neither Ramsey, nor Phillips '415 nor any combination of Ramsey and Phillips '415 anticipates discloses, teaches, shows, suggests, infers or in any way renders obvious the present invention as claimed in Claims 1, 3 – 6 and 18 – 20.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 3 – 6 and 18 – 20 patentably distinguish over Ramsey and Phillips '415.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 28 – 31, 33 – 34 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Helbling ‘497 in view of U.S. Patent 5,957,326 to Ostgaard (hereinafter referred to as “Ostgaard”). According to the Examiner, Helbling ‘497 discloses the elements previously discussed and Ostgaard discloses the elements not inherently disclosed by Helbling ‘497. Regarding Claim 34, the Examiner stated that Ostgaard discloses at least one item of value comprises a coupon redeemable for at least one second product (Col. 3, lines 4 – 15). The Examiner opined that it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Helbling ‘497 to dispense a sample to introduce prospective customers to a product and encourage future purchases as taught by Ostgaard and come up with the instant invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s rejection of Claims 28 – 31 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Helbling ‘497 in view of Ostgaard. Claims 33 – 34 have been cancelled by this Response.

As established earlier hereinabove, Helbling ‘497 does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the door exercised by a user for accessing a storage cavity containing products. [Claim 28]

Ostgaard contributes nothing toward providing the elements not provided by Helbling ‘497. Neither Helbling ‘497, nor Ostgaard nor any combination of Helbling ‘497 and Ostgaard anticipates discloses, teaches, shows, suggests, infers or in any way renders obvious the present invention as claimed in Claims 28 – 31 and 36.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 28 – 31 and 36 patentably distinguish over Helbling ‘497 and Ostgaard.

The Examiner continued in the Office Action, rejecting Claims 28 – 33 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Helbling ‘497 in view of Ramsey.

According to the Examiner, Helbling ‘497 discloses elements previously discussed and Ramsey discloses the elements not inherently disclosed by Helbling ‘497.

Regarding Claim 32, the Examiner stated that Ramsey discloses a communication system comprising a satellite communication connection with a remote controlling station (Col. 8, lines 42 – 60; 109, FIG. 4). According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Helbling ‘497 to dispense a sample to introduce a prospective customer to a product and encourage future purchases as taught by Ramsey and come up with the instant invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner’s rejection of Claims 28 – 32 and 36 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Helbling ‘497 in view of Ramsey. Claim 33 has been cancelled by this Response.

As established earlier hereinabove, Helbling ‘497 does not anticipate, disclose, teach, show, suggest, infer or in any way render obvious:

An apparatus for use dispensing at least one coupon in cooperation with a companion product vending device having a direct link between the apparatus and the door exercised by a user for accessing a storage cavity containing products. [Claim 28]

Ramsey contributes nothing toward providing the elements not provided by Helbling ‘497. Neither Helbling ‘497, nor Ramsey nor any combination of Helbling ‘497 and Ramsey anticipates discloses, teaches, shows, suggests, infers or in any way renders obvious the present invention as claimed in Claims 28 – 32 and 36.

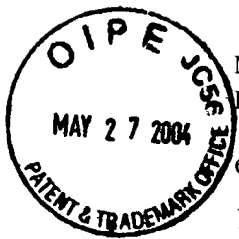
It is respectfully submitted that Claims 28 – 32 and 36 patentably distinguish over Helbling '497 and Ramsey.

The Examiner cited but did not rely upon other prior art: U.S. Patent 6,295,482 to Tognazzini (hereinafter referred to as "Tognazzini"), U.S. Patent 6,628,764 to Petite (hereinafter referred to as "Petite") and U.S. Patent 5,761,648 to Golden et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Golden").

Applicants have reviewed the other art cited of record. None of the art individually or in any combination with each other or with Veeneman, Ramsey, Flubacker Ostgaard, Maggard, Helbling '497, Comer or Phillips anticipates discloses, teaches, shows, suggests, infers or in any way renders obvious the present invention as claimed in Claims 1, 3 – 7, 18 – 26, 28 – 32 and 35 - 36. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 3 – 7, 18 – 26, 28 – 32 and 35 - 36 patentably distinguish over the art of record.

Applicants respectfully request an extension of the period for response to the Office Action for one month until May 22, 2004,, and the required fee under 35 U.S.C. 1.17(a)(1) is enclosed with this response.

Since Applicants have fully and completely responded to the Official Action, this Application is now in order for early action and such early action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner would deem a telephone conference to be of value in



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expediting this Application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (972) 758-1955 at his convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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I certify that this document is being deposited on May 20, 2004, with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail under 37 C.F.R. 1.8 and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Donald D. Mondul, Attorney for Applicants

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